

2012 RIASP Fall General Membership Meeting

Questions for the RIDE Leadership Panel

At the Rhode Island Association of School Principals' (RIASP) general membership meeting on October 17, 2012, representatives from the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) responded to a series of educator evaluation related questions prepared by the RIASP board. Approximately 50 RIASP members were in attendance, and the following questions and answers represent the information discussed at the meeting.

Teachscape Video training (Framework for Teaching Proficiency System)

How did RIDE norm the ratings on the videos?

- The Educational Testing Service (ETS) and Teachscape did the master scoring work (not RIDE). The Framework for Teaching Proficiency System (FFTPS) is a product purchased to support the work of evaluators.
- A team of master coders from across the nation, with a minimum of 20 years of experience in K-12 schools, collaborated on this project.
- Master coders were trained by the ETS research and assessment development team.
- A final review was then completed by Charlotte Danielson, the creator of the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*, and members of the Danielson Group.
- Once these determinations were finalized, master coders then wrote the rationales, and a different master coder then reviewed all of the examples for each component.

What kind of feedback about the video training should principals provide?

- Any and all feedback is welcome. RIDE will use surveys to formally solicit feedback throughout the year, but educators can always use the dedicated evaluation email address (educator.evaluation@ride.ri.gov) to provide ongoing feedback.
- RIDE will continue to share feedback from the field with ETS and Teachscape.
- The new sub-skill report is a direct result of feedback from the field.

Proficiency Test requirement to for classroom observations

What are RIDE's expectations for the LEAs regarding the results of the principals' proficiency test scores?

- The results of the proficiency test will not be used for any individual certification decisions.
- RIDE will analyze the statewide data to help plan future training and support for evaluators.
- Individual superintendents and charter school leaders can request access to the proficiency test results for their evaluators. The first FFTPS report will be available after the November 15th deadline. RIDE will meet with RIASP and RISSA to discuss how this data will be maintained and used.

Can this be eliminated since so many superintendents have not placed value on the pass/fail?

- RIDE expects all personnel evaluating teachers to complete the Observer Training and the Proficiency Test.
- Completing the Proficiency Test is part of the learning process, and the new sub skills report provides evaluators with valuable feedback.
- The FFTPS is an essential feature that further supports the development of a fair, accurate, and meaningful system that will help improve teaching and learning.

What is the purpose of the 90-day test limitation if someone fails twice?

- We have requested Teachscape waive the 90-day wait period. We will follow-up as soon as we have confirmation.
- The wait period was established for two reasons: (1) to encourage test-takers to pursue adequate retraining before attempting the re-test; and (2) to provide sufficient time for ETS and Teachscape to develop new test forms for retesting, to ensure that no tester is re-tested using material to which they were previously exposed during the initial test.

Student Learning Objectives and Final Effectiveness Rating

Was the "weight" of the SLO increased because not enough teachers were rated as Developing under Edition 1?

- No, the Final Effectiveness Rating Matrix was developed with educator profiles in mind and was not developed to force a specific distribution of educator performance. The combined ratings in the Final Effectiveness Rating Matrix are neither random nor limited to a certain percentage.
- In Edition I there were 4 performance levels for individual SLOs and 5 performance levels for sets of SLOs. For Edition II, this was changed to 4 performance levels for both individual and sets of SLOs (based on feedback from the field that the 5-point scale made it too hard to differentiate). Changing to 4 performance levels for sets of SLOs required the final matrix to go from 4x5 to 4x4, which required us to re-evaluate the profiles in the final matrix.
- RIDE has no interest in any specific distribution of ratings, including an increased number of teachers in the *Developing* category. Our goal is for every approved system to produce accurate ratings.

What are RIDE's expectations for disciplines with no baseline data?

- Every discipline can have baseline data.
- Data that provides an indication of students' skill or knowledge level at the beginning of the course can be used as baseline data to inform the setting of targets for SLOs.
- This could include a teacher-created or commercial assessment and focused on either the current or previous grade's standards or content.

Does the Data use PD series advocate the use of a single point of data to demonstrate student learning like the SLOs?

- No, the data use PD series and the SLO process advocate for multiple data sources or multiple data points of the same measure.

Changes within Final Effectiveness Rating Matrix for Teachers

What is the rationale behind the changes made to the matrix that allows for fewer teachers to be rated as "effective"?

- It is a misconception that the final matrix allows for fewer teachers, or building administrators, to be rated as *Effective*.
- The Final Effectiveness Rating Matrix was developed with educator profiles in mind and was not developed to force a specific distribution of educator performance. The combined ratings in the Final Effectiveness Matrix are neither random nor limited to a certain percentage.
- All of the approved evaluation systems in Rhode Island are standards-based systems. They are designed so that all educators have the opportunity to attain scores of "3" or "4" on the three evaluation criteria of Student Learning, Professional Practice, and Professional Foundations.

The use of "averages" does not support best practice for the assessment of students – why is it being used to assess teachers?

- Assuming this question is referring to the fact that the components on the Rhode Island Model's Professional Practice rubric are scored after each observation and the individual component scores across observations are averaged and rounded to the nearest tenth to get a summative score for each component. This is the only place where anything is averaged.
- Switching from a holistic scoring process where Professional Practice was scored once at the end of the year to after each classroom observation is a key change from Edition I to Edition II, based on overwhelming feedback from the field, and the goal of creating a fair, accurate and meaningful system. This type of scoring increases educator transparency (teachers don't have to wait until the end of the year to see their Professional Practice score).
- The reason the individual scores are averaged is because the total Teacher Professional Practice rubric score represents typical performance. Each observation is weighted equally.
- Averaging the individual component scores also helps to increase consistency across schools and districts.

- The model is not designed to only provide teachers with summative feedback and support based on their total Teacher Professional Practice rating. The feedback teachers receive after each observation should support their ongoing development.

Why would we label an experienced teacher as “Developing”?

- It is a misconception to assume that all experienced teachers are *Effective* or *Highly Effective*. Not all experienced teachers are the same. Even experienced teachers fall across the spectrum of performance.
- All teachers deserve a clear picture of their performance, based on multiple measures and frequent observations. All of the approved evaluation systems are designed to provide accurate information about teacher performance.
- Originally, this performance level was called *Minimally Effective*. It was changed to *Developing* based on feedback from educators.

Access to the data collected in the EPSS

What happens if EPSS drops while a principal is in the middle of an observation? Is that lost?

- The EPSS allows evaluators to capture observation notes offline.
- The evaluator opens the desired form(s) while he/she has connectivity.
- If the evaluator then moves to a location without internet access, the data will be stored on the evaluator’s local device (e.g., laptop, iPad, model device, etc.).
- When the evaluator regains connectivity, the EPSS automatically prompts the evaluator to sync the data with the server.
- However, if an unexpected issue arises causing the browser window and/or the machine being used to shut down during a session unexpectedly before the user has saved it, information entered during that session will be lost. This scenario would be true in most software applications. For this reason users are encouraged to save often, particularly if they are entering a large amount of data into a form over a prolonged period.

Do we have to show evidence in EPSS all year long or can we just submit end of the year ratings to be in compliance?

- Any LEA not fully utilizing the EPSS is still required to submit key data elements to RIDE through the EPSS (Professional Practice ratings; Professional Foundations/Responsibilities ratings; combined Practice and Foundations scores; Student Learning Objective ratings; Rhode Island Growth Model ratings; and final effectiveness ratings).
- For LEAs fully utilizing the EPSS, the key evaluation data elements will automatically be submitted to RIDE. For LEAs not fully utilizing the EPSS, additional technical development with the LEA will be required and there could be an additional cost to the LEA.

Will EPSS work without a Wi-Fi connection as proposed?

- Yes, users can complete most EPSS forms offline. The only form that does not currently allow this functionality is the SLO form.

What is the interconnection between the EPSS and a personnel file?

- The EPSS helps to collect and manage evaluation information.
- Evaluation information is considered part of an employee’s personnel file.
- If an LEA has a data system to maintain personnel files, the EPSS does not connect to that system or exchange any information electronically.

Which parts of the EPSS can be subject to the Access to Public Records (APRA)?

- The Access to Public Records Act in Rhode Island is clear that “information in personnel files maintained to hire, evaluate, promote, or discipline any employee of a public body” is “exempt from public disclosure.” Educator evaluations definitely fall within this category, and therefore RIDE will not release individual evaluation results to the public or to the media. Commissioner Gist sent a letter to all educators in March, 2012 that further explained this safeguard.

- RIDE also adopted policies on student and personnel data confidentiality that includes a policy on the disclosure of certified educator evaluations. The policy was included in the Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo on October 12, 2012.

Sustainability of RI Model Educator Evaluation System

This model is still not manageable with the given staff and mandates - how will we sustain our work when RTTT money is gone?

- The primary purpose of RTTT was to provide an infusion of funding for the design and implementation of education reforms, and new evaluation systems is one of those reforms. It is incumbent on LEAs to plan for ongoing implementation of their own educator evaluation system.
- Implementation should become more manageable over time as people become more familiar and efficient with the process.
- EPSS will continue to be free of charge to LEAs after RTTT.
- RIDE will continue to provide training programs at no charge to districts.
- The upcoming differentiated evaluation process will also help address capacity challenges.
- RIDE is committed to working with principals to develop solutions to common challenges, including capacity challenges.

What types of structures or staffing changes should districts consider to sustain this work?

- LEAs should pursue structures that empower building administrators to be instructional leaders and consider how instructional leadership can be shared and distributed.
- LEAs should ensure all positions are aligned with ultimate goal of improving and sustaining high-levels of student achievement.

What is RIDE's vision for changes in leadership credentialing programs in light of these changes?

- Any changes should align with the primary focus of building and district administrators as instructional leaders.
- RI programs are already discussing how to incorporate new initiatives into the preparation of new leaders.

Is RIDE open to the concept of formal, open exchanges between and among districts to discuss intra and inter district reliability and validity measures? If so, what would those look like as we work independently on this work?

- LEAs are encouraged to establish local procedures and metrics to monitor the reliability and validity of their own system.
- LEAs are also encouraged to establish relationships with other LEAs to share metrics and collaborate on improvement efforts.

School Accountability System

Why was only one year of data used to classify schools in the new RIDE School Accountability System?

- The RIDE School Accountability System is an annual measure, designed to be sensitive enough to track changes from year-to-year.
- Schools have been classified on one year of data since the beginning of No Child Left Behind.